Project reports for towns

3423. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Karnataka has submitted detailed project reports for 11 towns namely, Gokak, Baillahongal, Shahbad, Hospet, Gangavathi, Kanakapura, Yadgir, Dandeli, Siruguppa, Bagalkot and Madikeri involving a total outlay of Rs. 169.44 crores to the Central Government;

(b) if so, what is the present status of consideration of the proposals; and

(c) by when the funds are likely to be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) In addition to the ongoing projects in Karnataka under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), the Government of Karnataka has submitted additional proposals with an estimated amount of Rs. 165.57 crore for 11 towns namely; Bagalkot, Maddur, Gokak, Baillahongol, Shahbad, Hospet, Gangavath, Kanakpura, Yadgir, Dandeli, Siraguppa. Due to funds constraints in the X Plan, these proposals could not be considered and the State Government of Karnataka had been informed accordingly.

Illegal sand mining

3424. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the large scale illegal sand mining taking place in the beds of various inter-State, State rivers in the country, especially in Kerala;

(b) if so, whether it has resulted in the environmental degradation in the respective regions;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is any Central level mechanism to control illegal sand mining on the river beds; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Tiger Poaching in Similipal Reserve

3425. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the large scale tiger poaching in Orissa's Similipal Reserve, the largest tiger sanctuary of the State;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any action to prevent the large scale poaching; and

(c) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) As informed by the State, no such report has come to light.

Increase in Recorded Forest Area

3426. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Recorded Forest Area (RFA) had increased to 77474000 hectare in 2003;

(b) if so, the reason of such increase;

(c) the process by which land is notified as Recorded Forest Area (RFA);

(d) the break-up of this increase district-wise; and

(e) the type of land use on this newly categorized Recorded Forest Area (RFA) prior to its declaration as RFA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Recorded Forest Area (RFA) increased to 77474000 hectares as per the "State of Forest Report (SFR)-2003". Recorded Forest Area (RFA) is the geographical area recorded as forest in Government records". The increase/